Overview

The academic year of 2010-2011 was one of both sadness and celebration for the division. After an illness that began in May 2010, Dr. Frank Burton passed away on August 2, 2010. His life and accomplishments were celebrated in many venues including a special service held in the hospital chapel and attended by many who had been associated with Frank during his 27 years as a faculty member at Saint Louis University. A teaching award given by graduating fellows, a lectureship and a research fund have all been established in Frank’s name as ways in which his legacy of compassionate patient care and devotion to research and education in pancreatic diseases will be remembered.

I had assumed the role of Interim Director in May 2010 and was selected to be the Division Director as of October 1, 2010. The division added two new faculty members as well. David Wang, MD, PhD, joined the research faculty as Associate Research Professor on January 1, 2011 coming from Beth Israel Hospital at Harvard with expertise in cholesterol metabolism and gallstone formation. Jason Taylor, MD, joined the faculty as an Assistant Professor in June, leaving his faculty position at the University of Michigan where he was recognized for his expertise in advanced biliary endoscopy and endoscopic ultrasound. Dr. Taylor’s wife, Layla Hajjafar, MD, will be joining the Division later in 2011 as a transplant hepatologist. At the end of AY11, the division was made up of 18 clinical faculty and 3 research faculty members. The division was pleased to have 10 doctors identified as St. Louis’ “Best Doctors” this year.

The division continues to operate a large outpatient clinical practice with a busy clinic at the SLUH based clinic within the Doctor’s Office Building. A total of 12,145 patient visits took place, of which 2,173 were new patients in this clinic. Faculty members also see outpatients at the Salus Center, the John Cochran Veteran’s Administration Medical Center, St. Mary’s Health Center and a small outreach clinic at Marshall Browning Hospital in DuQuoin IL. At SLU Hospital, the division performed 3,830 endoscopic procedures including 1048 open access procedures in which patients are referred directly to the endoscopy unit for routine screening exams. In addition there were also 781 ERCP procedures performed by the division. Dr. Banke Agarwal also continues to operate a busy advanced endoscopy service at Missouri Baptist Hospital as well where he performed 1,985 procedures in addition to the 136 procedures performed at SLU Hospital. Dr. Samer Alkaade had a very busy year, continuing his own clinical practice while assuming much of the clinical work previously handled by Dr. Frank Burton. Dr. Mary Burton also increased her level of clinical activity going from part time to full time and carrying a large clinical load.

The faculty members oversee the care of inpatients at Saint Louis University Hospital, the VA Medical Center and St. Mary’s Health Center with the Saint Louis University Hospital service being divided into GI, Liver and Pancreaticobiliary services. A total of 4,779 inpatients visits were conducted by faculty members this year at Saint Louis University Hospital. The three Saint Louis University Hospital inpatient services compose the Brown Team teaching service which serves as a rich educational environment for residents and subspecialty fellows. The division continues to accept four fellows per year for a three year fellowship in gastroenterology. We also continue to take an additional fellow to participate in the liver cancer and liver transplant teams.

Education is important to all faculty members of the division. Our division is primarily responsible for the month long Phase II GI Module taught to second year medical students every February. This year, Dr. Jennifer LaBundy assumed responsibility for organizing the GI module activities. Dr. Erin Karandish assisted Dr. LaBundy with this important endeavor. This complex task of organizing 32 lecture hours, 9 hours of small group sessions and other activities, such as labs and endoscopy sessions, was in good hands with Drs. LaBundy and Karandish as noted by students in their evaluations. The GI Module may be the only preclinical course
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now organized by a previous student of the same course (Dr. LaBundy). The faculty members continue to teach students and residents in the inpatient setting, clinics and noon conferences. Multiple regularly scheduled conferences take place throughout the month including GI-Hepatobiliary Tumor Conference, Liver Pathology Conference, General GI Colorectal Pathology Conference, Clinical Case Management, Motility Conference, Morbidity and Mortality Conference, Nutrition Conference, General GI Research Conference, General GI Journal Club, Pancreatobiliary Journal Club, GI Fellows Case Conference, GI Grand Rounds, Pathophysiology Conference, and Liver Transplant Conference as well as the various conferences hosted by the Department of Internal Medicine. The division has an active visiting professor program with our faculty members participating as visiting professors both nationally and internationally.

Faculty members in the division are active in clinical and basic research. Dr. Prather continues her work on functional dyspepsia as part of an NIH trial. Much of the clinical research is conducted in the GI Studies Unit at the Salus Center. The clinical trials unit oversees the operation of 30-40 industry trials at any given time as well as four ongoing major NIH trials. Work from the clinical trials on hepatitis C culminated in three New England Journal of Medicine papers this year, one with Dr. Bruce Bacon as the lead author, one with Dr. Adrian Di Bisceglie as lead author and the third with Dr. Di Bisceglie as a coauthor. I continue to lead the NIH NASH Clinical Research Network studies out of the Salus Center. The pediatricians in this group published the results of the major TONIC treatment trial in the Journal of the American Medical Association this year based on work partly undertaken at the Salus Center.

Laboratory research continues to focus on mechanisms of liver fibrosis and liver injury. We expanded the areas of interest this year with the addition of Dr. David Wang and his interests in cholesterol metabolism and gallstone formation. I have continued to work on understanding why trans-fat consumption causes NASH and liver cancer in mice. Dr. Xiaofeng Fan continues to work on hepatitis C quasispecies and Dr. Barbara Ulmasov continues to explore the causes of chronic pancreatitis using a mouse model which she has perfected.

Much of the liver related research is conducted by members of the Saint Louis University Liver Center, a Center that includes faculty members from pediatrics, surgery, radiology and pathology. The Liver Center holds monthly research conferences to discuss results and promote collaborations across disciplines. An important source of seed funding for novel projects conducted by Liver Center members is provided by the Friends of the Saint Louis University Liver Center, a non-profit organization put together by grateful patients. The Friends organization continues to raise money through a variety of fund raising events throughout the year, with the centerpiece being the Denim and Diamonds event in the fall.

New Faculty Entering the Division

Layla Hajjafar, M.D., M.Sc., Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine (AY12)
Omer Junaidi, M.D., Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine (AY12)
Jason Taylor, M.D., Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine (AY12)
David Q.-H. Wang, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Research Professor (AY11)

Honors and Recognition

Best Doctors, St. Louis Magazine
Banke Agarwal, M.D.
Samer Alkaade, M.D.
Bruce R. Bacon, M.D.
Alex S. Befeler, M.D.
Iliana Bouneva, M.D.
Adrian M. Di Bisceglie, M.D.
Jennifer LaBundy, M.D.
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Brent A. Neuschwander-Tetri, M.D.
M. Louay Omran, M.D.
Charlene M. Prather, M.D.

Banke Agarwal, M.D.
Fellow of the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

Samer Alkaade, M.D.
Marquis Who’s Who in America

Bruce R. Bacon, M.D.
Chair, Transplant Hepatology Board, American Board of Internal Medicine
AASLD Distinguished Service Award

David Q.-H. Wang, M.D., Ph.D.
Visiting Professor, the University of Bari School of Medicine, Bari, Italy
Member of the Editorial Board, European Journal of Clinical Investigation
Chair, Gastroenterology Study Section, Merit Review Committees of Veterans Health Administration

Grants and Contracts Held By Each Faculty Member

Samer Alkaade, M.D.


Banke Agarwal, M.D.
Institute for Science and Health, 05-1760-01a, “Immunohistochemical panel of markers to aid in early diagnosis of pancreatic cancers,” 2006-2011, $30,000.

Institute for Science and Health, 10-1760-01B, “Identification of clinical syndromes associated with early pancreatic cancer,” 2010-2011. $6,250

Alex S. Befeler, M.D.

Cindy Cai, M.D., Ph.D.
Ellison Medical Foundation, AG-NS-0231-03, “Nuclear ferritin may protect against oxidative and light-induced DNA damage in retinal pigment epithelial cells,” 2007-2011, $150,000.

Adrian M. Di Bisceglie, M.D.


Saint Louis University President’s Research Fund, “Virus Discovery by Pyrosequencing” 9/01/10 – 8/31/11, $25,000.

**Xiaofeng Fan, M.D., Ph.D.**

NIH/NIDDK R01 DK080711-01, “Hepatitis C Virus Quasispecies in the Resistance to Antiviral Therapy,” 2008-2013, $1,000,000.

Saint Louis University, Internal Medicine Seed Grant, “Virus Discovery by Pyrosequencing, 7/1/10 – 6/30/11, $25,000.

**Fasiha Kanwal, M.D.**

Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Merit Review Award, “Quality of Care Among Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C Virus Infection,” 2008-2011, $644,000.

American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, “Quality of Endoscopic Care in Patients with Cirrhosis,” 2008-2011, $75,000.

American College of Gastroenterology, “Quality of Care in Patients with Cirrhosis,” 2009-2011, $34,643.

Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Merit Review Award, “Patients’ Experiences of Antiviral Treatment for Hepatitis C in the VHA,” 2008-2011, $689,000.

**Brent A. Neuschwander-Tetri, M.D.**


NIH/NIDDK 3U01DK061718-08S1, “The Saint Louis University Component of the NASH Clinical Research Network (ARRA supplement),” 2010-2011, $119,263.


Internal Medicine Seed Grant Award, “Identifying novel therapeutics for NASH using the ALIOS mouse model,” 2010-2011, $25,000.

Lottie Hardy Charitable Trust, “Western fast food diet and altered hepatic DNA stability in mice,” 2010-2011, $50,000.

**Charlene M. Prather, M.D.**


During fiscal year 2011 the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology had 41 active studies with various industry sponsors. Due to confidentiality agreements and non-publicity clauses in contracts with sponsors, specific information pertaining to industry sponsored research may not be released in public documents.

### Faculty

#### Professor and Director
Brent A. Neuschwander-Tetri, M.D.

#### Professor
- **James F. King Endowed Chair**
  - Bruce R. Bacon, M.D.

#### Professor
- Frank R. Burton, M.D.
  - (deceased 8/2/10)
- Adrian M. Di Bisceglie, M.D.
- Charlene M. Prather, M.D.

#### Adjunct Professor
- John K. Olynyk, M.B.B.S.

#### Clinical Professor
- Giuseppe Aliperti, M.D.
- Edward Kinsella, M.D.

#### Associate Professor
- Banke Agarwal, M.D.
- Alex S. Befeler, M.D.
- Fasihah Khanwal, M.D.
- David O.-H. Wang, M.D., Ph.D.

#### Associate Research Professor
- Xiaofeng Fan, M.D., Ph.D.

#### Adjunct Associate Professor
- Robert B. Britton, Ph.D.

#### Associate Clinical Professor
- Glenn L. Gordon, M.D.
- John S. Farrell, M.D.
- Michael F. Flynn, M.D.
- Neil W. Frederickson, M.D.
- Ronald J. Gould, M.D.

#### Assistant Professor
- Samer Alkaade, M.D.
- Yassir Ashraf, M.D.
- Iliana Bouneva, M.D.
- Mary S. Burton, M.D.
- Christine Hachem, M.D.
- Jennifer LaBundy, M.D.
- M. Louay Omran, M.D.

#### Assistant Research Professor
- Barbara Ulmasov, Ph.D.

#### Adjunct Assistant Professor
- Sara Echelmeyer, M.D.
- Erin Karandish, M.D.

#### Assistant Clinical Professor Emeritus
- Max Inman, M.D.

#### Assistant Clinical Professor
- Timothy T. Brady, M.D.
- Barry D. Brown, M.D.
- Damon C. Clines, M.D.

#### Senior Clinical Instructor
- John F. Carter, M.D.

#### Clinical Instructor
- Altaf Khan, M.D.

#### Post-Doctoral Fellows
- Jianguo Lin, M.D., Ph.D.
- Weihua Wang, M.D., Ph.D.

#### Office Manager
- Ms. Linda Mahn

#### Business Manager
- Lou Ann Bierman, R.N., M.S.N.